Numb. 83

The TATLER.

By *Isaac Bickerstaff* Esq;

Senilis Stultitia, quæ Deliratio appellari solet, Senum levium est non omnium. M. T. C.

From *Tuesday October* 18. to *Thursday October* 20. 1709.

From my own Apartment, October 19.

IT is my frequent Practice to visit Places of Resort in this Town where I am least known, to observe what Reception my Works meet with in the World, and what good Effects I may promise my self from my Labours: And it being a Privilege asserted by Monsieur *Montaigne* and others, of vain-glorious Memory, That we Writers of Essays may talk of our selves, I take the Liberty to give an Account of the Remarks which I find are made by some of my gentle Readers upon these my Dissertations. I happen'd this Evening to fall into a Coffee-house near the *'Change*, where Two Persons were reading my Account of the Table of *Fame*. The one of these was commenting as he read, and explaining who was meant by this and t'other Worthy as he pass'd on. I observ'd the Person over-against him wonderfully intent and satisfied with his Explanation. When he came to *Julius Cæsar*, who is said to have refus'd any Conductor to the Table; No, no, said he, he is in the right of it, he has Money enough to be welcome wherever he comes; and then whisper'd, He means a certain Colonel of the Train-Bands. Upon reading, that *Aristotle* made his Claim with some Rudeness, but great Strength of Reason; Who can that be, so rough and so reasonable? It must be some Whig I warrant you. There is nothing but Party in these publick Papers. Where *Pythagoras* is said to have a Golden Thigh, Ay, ay, said he, he has Money enough in his Breeches, that is the Alderman of our Ward. You must know, whatever he read, I found he interpreted from his own Way of Life and Acquaintance. I am glad my Readers can construe for themselves these difficult Points; but for the Benefit of Posterity, I design, when I come to write my last Paper of this Kind, to make it an Explanation of all my former. In that Piece, you shall have all I have commended, with their proper Names. The faulty Characters must be left as they are, because we live in an Age wherein Vice is very general, and Virtue very particular; for which Reason the latter only wants Explanation. But I must turn my present Discourse to what is of yet greater Regard to me than the Care of my Writings; that is to say, the Preservation of a Lady's Heart. Little did I think I should ever have Business of this Kind on my Hands more; but as little as any one who knows me would believe it, there is a Lady at this Time who professes Love to me. Her Passion and good Humour you shall have in her own Words.

Mr. *Bickerstaff*,

'I Had formerly a very good Opinion of my self; but it is now withdrawn, and I have 'plac'd it upon you, Mr. *Bickerstaff*, for whom I 'am not asham'd to declare, I have a very great 'Passion and Tenderness. 'Tis not for your Face, 'for that I never saw; your Shape and Height I 'am equally a Stranger to: But your Understanding charms me, and I'm lost if you don't dissemble a little Love for me. I am not without 'Hopes, because I am not like the tawdry gay 'Things that are fit only to make Bone-Lace. I 'am neither childish-young, nor beldam-old, but '(the World says) a good agreeable Woman.

'Speak Peace to a troubled Heart, troubled 'only for you; and in your next Paper let me find 'your Thoughts of me.

'Don't think of finding out who I am, for notwithstanding your Interest in Dæmons, they 'cannot help you either to my Name, or a Sight 'of my Face; therefore don't let them deceive 'you.

'I can bear no Discourse if you are not the Subject; and, believe me, I know more of Love than 'you do of Astronomy.

'Pray say some civil Things in Return to my 'Generosity, and you shall have my very best Pen 'imploy'd to thank you, and I will confirm it. 'I am,

Your Admirer,

Maria.

There is something wonderfully pleasing in the Favour of Women; and this Letter has put me in so good an Humour, that nothing could displease me since I receiv'd it. My Boy breaks Glasses, and Pipes, and instead of giving him a Knock of the Pate, as my Way is (for I hate scolding at Servants) I only say, *Ah!* Jack, *Thou hast a Head, and so has a Pin*; or some such merry Expression. But alas! How am I mortify'd when he is putting on my fourth Pair of Stockings on these poor Spindles of mine? The Fair One understands Love better than I Astronomy! I am sure, without the Help of that Art, this poor meagre Trunk of mine is a very ill Habitation for Love. She is pleas'd to speak civily of my Sense; but *Ingenium male habitat* is an invincible Difficulty in Cases of this Nature. I had always indeed, from a Passion to please the Eyes of the Fair, a great Pleasure in Dress. Add to this, That I have writ Songs since I was Sixty, and have liv'd with all the Circumspection of an old Beau, as I am: But my Friend *Horace* has very well said, *Every Year takes something from us*; and instructed me to form my Pursuits and Desires according to the Stage of my Life: Therefore I have no more to value my self upon, than that I can converse with young People without Peevishness, or wishing my self a Moment younger. For which Reason, when I am amongst 'em, I rather moderate, than interrupt their Diversions. But tho' I have this Complacency, I must not pretend to

write

write to a Lady civil Things, as *Maria* desires. Time was, when I could have told her, I had receiv'd a Letter from her Fair Hands; and, That if this Paper trembled as she read it, it then best express'd its Author, or some other gay Conceit. Tho' I never saw her, I could have told her, That good Sense and good Humour smil'd in her Eyes; That Constancy and good Nature dwelt in her Heart; That Beauty and good Breeding appear'd in all her Actions. When I was Five and Twenty, upon Sight of one Syllable, even wrong spelt, by a Lady I never saw, I could tell her, That her Height was that which was fit for inviting our Approach, and commanding our Respect; That a Smile sat on her Lips, which prefac'd her Expressions before she utter'd 'em, and her Aspect prevented her Speech. All she could say, tho' she had an infinite deal of Wit, was but a Repetition of what was express'd by her Form, her Form! which struck her Beholders with Ideas more moving and forcible, than ever were inspir'd by Musick, Painting, or Eloquence. At this Rate I panted in those Days; but, Ah! Sixty Three! I am very sorry I can only return the agreeable *Maria* a Passion, express'd rather from the Head than the Heart.

Dear Madam,

'YOU have already seen the best of me, and I so passionately love you, that I desire we 'may never meet. If you will examine your 'Heart, you will find, that you join the Man with 'the Philosopher: And if you have that kind O- 'pinion of my Sense as you pretend, I question 'not, but you add to it, Complexion, Air, and 'Shape: But, dear *Molly*, a Man in his grand Cli- 'macterick is of no Sex. Be a good Girl; and con- 'duct your self with Honour and Virtue, when 'you love one younger than my self. I am, with 'the greatest Tenderness,

Your innocent Lover,

I. B.

Will's Coffee-house, October 19.

There is nothing more common than the Weaknesses mentioned in the following Epistle; and I believe there is hardly a Man living who has not been more or less injur'd by it.

SIR, *Land's-End, Octob. 12.*

'I Have left the Town some Time; and much the sooner, for not having had the Advan- 'tage when I liv'd there, of so good a Pilot as you 'are to this present Age. Your Cautions to the 'young Men against the Vices of the Town are ve- 'ry well: But there is one not less needful, which 'I think you have omitted. I had from the Rough 'Diamond, (a Gentleman so call'd from an honest 'blunt Wit he had) not long since dead, this Obser- 'vation, That a young Man must be at least Three 'or Four Years in *London* before he dares say, *No.*

'You will easily see the Truth and Force of this 'Observation; for I believe, more People are drawn 'away against their Inclinations, than with. A 'young Man is afraid to deny any body going 'to a Tavern to Dinner; or after being gorg'd 'there, to repeat the same with another Company 'at Supper, or to drink excessively if desir'd, or go 'to any other Place, or commit any other Extrava- 'gancy propos'd. The Fear of being thought co- 'vetous, or to have no Money, or to be under the 'Dominion or Fear of his Parents and Friends, 'hinder him from the free Exercise of his Under- 'standing, and affirming boldly the true Reason, 'which is, his real Dislike of what is desir'd. If 'you could cure this slavish Facility, it would save 'Abundance at their first Entrance into the World. 'I am,

SIR, *Yours,*

Solomon Afterwit.

This Epistle has given an Occasion to a Treatise on this Subject, wherein I shall lay down Rules when a young Stripling is to say, No, and a young Virgin, Yes.

N. B. For the Publication of this Discourse, I wait only for Subscription from the Under-graduates of each University, and the young Ladies in the Boarding-Schools of *Hackney* and *Chelsea.*

St. James's Coffee-house, October 19.

Letters from the *Hague* of the 25th of *October, N. S.* advise, That the Garison of *Mons* march'd out on the 23d Instant, and a Garison of the Allies march'd into the Town. All the Forces in the Field, both of the Enemy and the Confederates, are preparing to withdraw into Winter Quarters.

In our last, Col. 1. *Line* 28. *for* Fickleness, *read* Fierceness.

Advertisements.

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